

### One more grade span configuration for consideration

I'm pleased to participate in the Educator Licensure Steering Committee that brings together multiple perspectives on licensure both to provide input to ISBE and to enlarge stakeholders' own understandings of issues that affect them.

After carefully pondering the issues that were raised at the June 8 grade span configuration meeting, I'm writing to place one more grade span configuration on the table for ISBE's consideration:

#### **PreK-5 (early childhood/elementary), 6-12 (middle/secondary)**

There are many merits to this configuration:

- (1) The span lines up with the K-5 and 6-8 breaks in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).
- (2) The 6-12 span ensures that teachers with subject matter endorsements will have a sufficient span of teaching opportunities in this economy.
- (3) The 6-12 span does not require Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) review: AMLE "does not typically review programs that prepare teachers for grade levels that include both elementary and middle or middle and high school grades (e.g., grades K-8 or 6-12)."
- (4) The PreK-3 stretch of the Birth-Grade 3 span remains intact; infant/toddler with its non-ISBE funding source and authority is excluded in this scenario and should be reconsidered at a later date in the context of the larger early learning enterprise.
- (5) The PreK-5 span requires early childhood teacher educators and elementary teacher educators to resolve the curricular distributions around child development and CCSS within a single endorsement. NAEYC (early childhood) and ACEI (elementary) specialized professional associations (SPAs) both support NCATE, soon to be CAEP accreditation; Jim Cibulka, president of NCATE/CAEP, may be able to advise on coordination.
- (6) The PreK-5 span preserves literacy development as a continuum, as opposed to distributing one portion to early childhood and another to elementary in Birth-Grade 1 or 2 early childhood vs. 1-5, 2-5, 1-6, 2-6 elementary configurations. Speaking as a literacy education expert (and former 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher and reading teacher), it is as essential for elementary teachers to understand language and emergent literacy development as it is for early childhood teachers to do so. In my experience, principals frequently reassign 1<sup>st</sup>-grade teachers to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, and vice versa.
- (7) With the proposed grade spans, principals, superintendents, and district leaders are afforded needed flexibility in hiring and in teacher grade assignment within schools.
- (8) The proposed spans will require SCDEs and other teacher preparation units to transform two certificates into one revamped one endorsement, while requiring that the current 6-12 certificate be converted into an endorsement in line with CCSS and revised IPTS standards.

Thanks for letting me share this proposal.

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